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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [KPKO](#) [NI](#) [IV](#)

SUBJECT: DOMESTIC SECURITY CONCERNS AND BUDGET WOES

PRECLUDE GON CONTRIBUTION TO COTE D'IVOIRE FORCE

CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR HOWARD F. JETER FOR REASONS 1.5  
(B) AND (D).

1. (C) During a November 15 meeting, Ambassador Jeter and Minister of State for Defense (Army) Malam Lawal Batagarawa discussed possible deployment of Nigerian forces in the ECOWAS monitoring force for Cote d'Ivoire. Citing Nigeria's role in peacekeeping operations in Sierra Leone and Liberia, Ambassador Jeter emphasized that Nigerian participation could be important to the ultimate success of the operation, particularly if large-scale fighting were renewed. While Batagarawa said the GON was committed to doing what was "best for the subregion", he was not sanguine about Nigerian participation in the ECOWAS observer force.

2. (C) Batagarawa thought the GON could not afford to deploy many soldiers outside of Nigeria while the present need for domestic security remained high. Recalling recent violence in Plateau state, he said the "killing would have been unbelievable" had the military been unable to intervene. In the absence of an effective police force, Batagarawa saw the military as the final guarantor of order.

3. (C) Noting the GON's large budgetary shortfall for this fiscal year (estimated at USD 2 billion), Batagarawa said Nigeria could ill afford to get involved in an open-ended commitment in Cote d'Ivoire. When told the USG commitment of USD 3 million would cover support costs of troops on the ground for six months, Batagarawa said the GON needed a commitment of at least a year's worth of on the ground logistics support, even to consider participating in the operation. Also, Batagarawa dismissed European offers of assistance, saying the Europeans always "promise heaven and earth" but never come through. Despite his misgivings, Batagarawa asked for a memorandum of the USG offer of assistance to ECOWAS. ODC Chief told him one would be forwarded. Batagarawa promised to contact the Ambassador regarding the matter next week.

4. (C) COMMENT: Given Nigeria's domestic concerns and tension in the Bakassi, Batagarawa is probably correct that there is not much appetite for GON participation in the Ivoirian deployment. Political considerations are very important now, given the approach of election season. Deployment in another peacekeeping operation would not be politically popular, and President Obasanjo's critics could excoriate him for sending troops to Cote d'Ivoire. Batagarawa's offer to review a memorandum of USG support may have left the door ajar slightly, but his gesture was probably the result of his intention to sow uncertainty and, at least at this meeting, to avoid a direct refusal. Getting the GON to revise its position will require much more work and the offer of significant additional, long-term assistance. Unfortunately, for the time being, domestic political, security and budgetary considerations will make Nigeria focus on its internal condition and less on its usual role as the fulcrum of West African peacekeeping and conflict resolution efforts. END COMMENT.  
JETER